Combating Toxic Behavior in Gaming

Community NerdyBirdy Apr 29, 2022

Gaming is one of the globe's fastest growing activities, and has brought enrichment and recreation to billions across the world. Gaming provides an outlet for engagement, community, and friendship that is safe, accessible, and affordable. However, at the same time, there are pockets of the gaming world filled with harmful and toxic groups and cultures.

That's the unfortunate dichotomy of gaming. As wonderful and inclusive as gaming can be, there are sore spots that cannot be denied. For millions of gamers, certain corners of the gaming community contain harassment, bullying, racism, misogyny, and other harmful behaviors. It's not uncommon for gamers to even give up certain games or communities because of persistent bullying or other negative interactions.

This status quo cannot be acceptable for new or seasoned gamers. The gaming community must always strive towards ensuring that gaming is a safe and welcome home for all. If we all win when everyone can play, then we certainly all lose when gamers leave a platform or community because of trolling, bullying, or harassment.

But what are ways that we can reduce, and eventually eliminate toxicity within gaming communities and platforms? Here are some things that you can do in your own gaming life to cut down on toxic behaviors, from broken controllers and foul language to outright bullying and harassment.

Stand Up and Point It Out

The first step towards fighting bad behavior in gaming is to identify it for what it is. Too often trash talking and foul language have been blown off as a part of the culture of gaming. For some games such as shooters, toxicity is

sometimes even encouraged. Some of the most popular personalities in esport shooters and MOBA's are followed exclusively for their rampant bad behavior.

But if we want the culture of gaming to change, we need to be ready to be part of that change. Refusing to accept toxicity means pointing it out when it occurs. Responding to toxic behavior can be difficult and requires a mixture of empathy, compassion, as well as an unyielding zero tolerance policy towards bad behavior.

When you witness toxic behavior, point it out and report it to the proper authorities. Identifying bad actors, quickly removing them, and setting a baseline for acceptable behavior are all key aspects towards reforming and reshaping a toxic environment.

Be An Agent for Change

Fighting toxicity in gaming requires a commitment to change across different levels of the community. From playing games in the home, to online tournaments, the culture of gaming needs to change to be more safe, welcoming, and inclusive.

Changing your gaming community begins with your own actions. Always strive to be an active participant for a positive culture, rather than a bystander to a toxic one. Speaking up with something as simple as "don't be toxic" can go a long way towards normalizing civility and etiquette. Similarly, simply being a good sport, encouraging sportsmanship, and treating all participants with kindness are other great ways to foster a welcoming community.

The Mission of the Xbox Ambassadors

The Xbox Ambassadors program is centered on the idea that when all can play, everyone wins. That's why we promote greater kindness and acceptance within our program to drive our mission of creating a safer, more inclusive and welcoming gaming community. As Ambassadors, we understand that we're on the front line of calling out and combating toxicity, and that each of our actions matter. As signers of the Xbox Ambassador pledge, we know that each of us has a responsibility to leave the gaming world better than we found it.

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